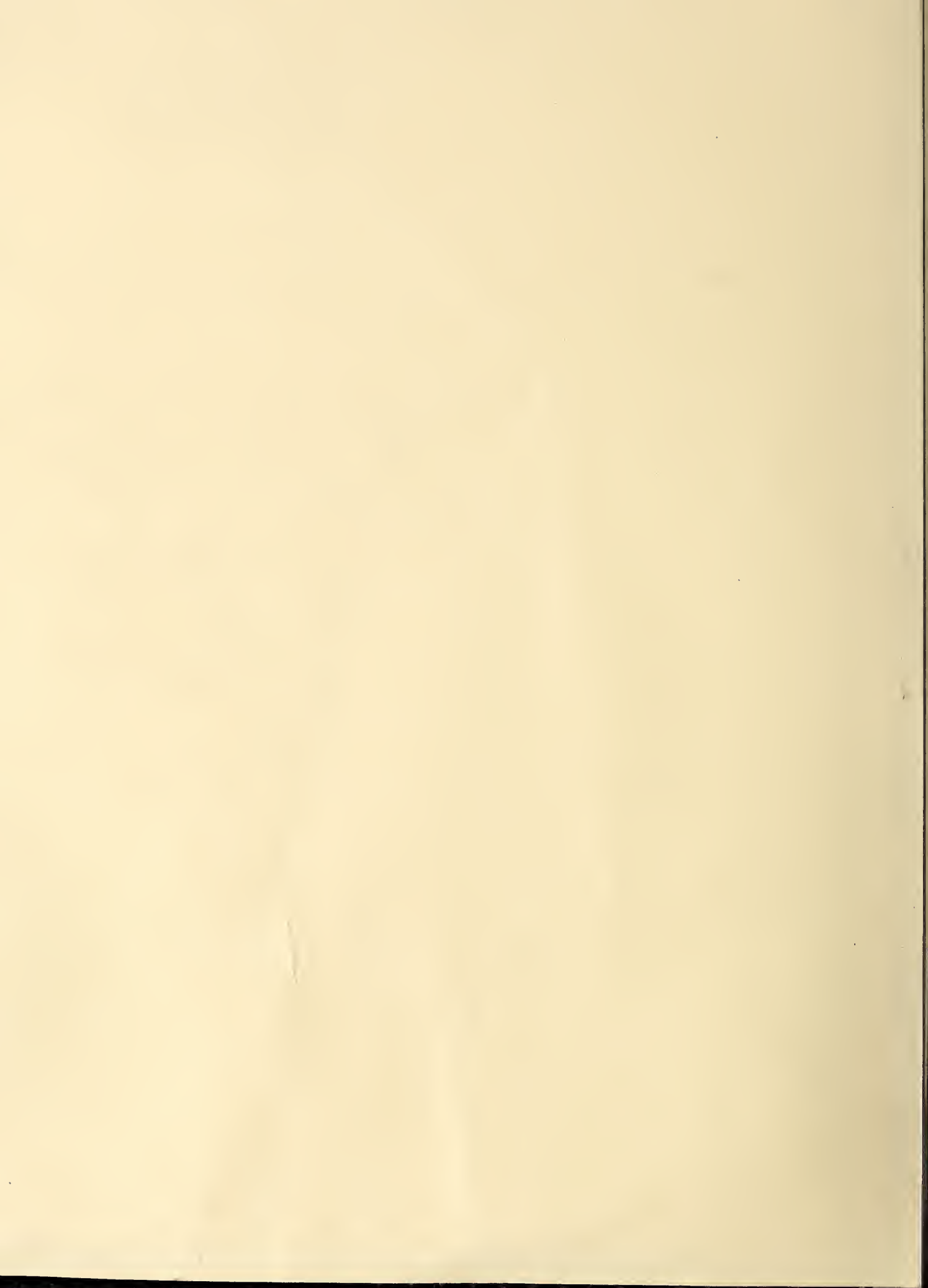


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LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE SPEAK*

Anna Jim Erickson

A year ago I had the uncommon pleasure of accepting a certificate and a check for \$500 from Louis Wilson, Director of Information for the National Plant Food Institute. The money was earmarked. It was to be used for advanced professional improvement in some phase of agricultural communications. The award was the first annual to be presented by the Institute to a member of the American Association of Agricultural College Editors.

Acceptance of the award meant a commitment to devote at least two months to some type of professional activity. There was an equally binding commitment to make a report of the knowledge obtained to the AAACE Board of Directors for their evaluation.

I have spent a great deal of the past year carrying out the first commitment.

As for the second - that's precisely why I am here. This is your answer to the \$500 question - what did I do with the money? And to the \$64,000 question: What did I learn?

When I left last year's ACE meeting, I took along an idea that I believed offered great possibilities for better insight into the persistent and ever present questions that plague information workers. They're so old, boat-up, worn-out, and threadbare that I almost blush to repeat them. But we might as well share our misery. The questions? Here they are - the ones you and I keep asking ourselves:

What kind of an information job am I doing? Am I reaching people? Am I influencing them? How can I know for sure what kind of a job I am doing? How can I do a better one?

Just as perennially as we are goaded by these disquieting questions, we come up with ideas, techniques or methods we believe will provide the answer, or, at least, partial answers. Often these ideas have been a reincarnation or transformation of old ideas, a synthesis of bits and parts of things we've always known, and sometimes only a readjustment of our focus. Always, of course, there is at least one new and different element or factor - if included only as a catalyst that makes possible a realignment of the other elements - that permits "a sea change into something new and strange."

The idea I took back to Washington State last July could be classified under any one of these categories. The idea appears to be fantastically simple. Certainly, though, the concept is bedrock Extension philosophy.

* Progress report of study project in agricultural communications made as result of AAACE-Plant Food Institute Award. Report presented AAACE at 1956 annual convention, July 18, at Pennsylvania State University. Anna Jim Erickson is Extension Information Specialist at Washington State College.

Information Planning, Like Charity, Begins in the Home

The idea? Go to the people - learn all you can about them. Their needs, wants and problems hold the key to an effective Extension information program even as they hold the key to an effective Extension program. Their words and the way they use them - the precise meaning and emotional context - provide the clues and cues to materials that really communicate - provide the key that unlocks eyes and ears and the emotional response that generates action.

The idea came from Dr. Gerhart Wiebe, then with CBS, now with Elmo Roper. Dr. Wiebe, through the good offices of Tom Page, was kind enough to spend several hours helping me get a clear focus on our information program in Washington State--helping me decide its major shortcomings and how we could tackle them.

I mention hours because it took several for Dr. Wiebe, by considerate and understanding probing, to break through a mindset fixed firmly on more effective information planning by extension workers, singly and collectively. Dr. Wiebe had no quarrel with that idea. He just did not believe it was the right place to start. By his questions, he finally was able to shift my focus from fellow extension workers to our publics - to the people we are trying to serve. The idea gradually percolated through my head that we must look to the people for the valid answers to those questions I've already listed. To write for people, to plan information materials for people, we must KNOW the people. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Once over that hurdle, we then considered "how" I could really get to know the people in Washington. We were agreed; I should go to the people. But how? What type of interview? Should I stick to the old folkway of just visiting or should I swing to the much more recent development of formal or scientifically structured interview? We considered traditional patterns and the newer techniques.

Traditionally, most Extension visiting or interviewing has come under two general heads, both largely informal and nonstructured. Extension reporters have gone to families who had a story to report. The purpose was to get information for that story.

Traditionally, county agents have always made visits to families. Usually the purpose has been to give information requested by the family. Sometimes agents have made visits to leaders or cooperators for some specific purpose, usually to further some phase of extension work.

These two types of visits usually are made to families we already know - or to families who make their questions and problems known. But how about the people who are getting along out there somehow but aren't making any noise about it?

In recent years the philosophy and practice of scientific sampling have resulted in myriad polls and surveys to get various kinds of definite and specific information. These have been formal calls with a questionnaire or a schedule of questions. This sampling technique has taken interviewers to a cross-section of the families in an area, including those both known and unknown to extension workers.

We considered, then, if we could strike some sort of middle ground between the age-old custom of visiting - usually with people we know or know about, and the more formal questionnaire interview with families, known and unknown.

This middle ground, as you know, has been explored by Dr. Carl Ransom Rogers through a method now called the nondirective or depth interview. Farm magazines have developed a middle ground method of their own, also. (I understand members of the Farm Journal staff have visited 400 families this past year alone.)

This middle ground, Dr. Wiebe felt, also offered great possibilities for extension workers. Our brainstorming went like this: Could we borrow from the old folkway of friendly visiting, from the newer nondirective or depth interview, and from our knowledge of scientific sampling to fashion a tool peculiarly adapted to Extension? Could we come up with some sort of combination that could help us find out how people really think and feel and talk about their needs, their interests, their problems? Could we use it to learn more than we have before about the immediacy and intensity of particular needs and problems, and to keep in closer touch with those needs and problems as they shift from month to month and year to year?

So a goal gradually took shape during that evening at ACE. It was to explore the possibilities of a type of farm and home visit that would keep us close to a representative sample of the people, that would bring us into their very inner sanctum: a visit, in other words, that would help us to KNOW BETTER the people we are serving.

The Depth Interview: A "Natural" for Extension?

We felt such a method would be a "natural" for any and all extension workers; that it would fit "hand-in-glove" into our regular methods and techniques; that it could become a perennial and permanent built-in steering mechanism for planning and evaluating programs as well as for providing production guides for more effective materials. What's more, we felt it could be added to our tool chest without any additional cost or any additional personnel.

Before I left ACE, I discussed the idea with Les Schlup, John Parsey and Stanley Andrews. Parsey directed me to Carl Ransom Rogers and to various books and articles about the nondirective method and its various applications. As I'm sure you know, the method was first used for clinical counseling. Rogers himself helped the Bureau of Agricultural Economics adapt the method to social surveys. It also has been adapted by industry for improving employee-management relations.

Back home in Pullman, Al Bond, Washington State College's agricultural sciences editor and my immediate boss, and I cleared the idea with our administrators, with the Extension research director and the Extension research committee, and with the rural sociologists on campus. All approved the idea and gave us the green light to explore the possibilities. I read Rogers' books and various other references on counseling and interviewing. An incomplete bibliography is attached.

We started the pretesting or trial-run interviews with Washington farm families in late November.

As we experimented with the method, it began to shape up like this: We made an unannounced visit to a family lasting at least two hours, more if possible. All visits were made in company with one, sometimes two, agents. I, at least, preferred to visit a family the agent did not know. The agent took the initiative in introducing both himself and me. Together we explained that our purpose was to get acquainted. All visits were home visits. The visiting technique was one of showing friendly interest, of listening and looking, of opening up areas of conversation and letting our hosts carry the conversational ball. We did not use a questionnaire of any sort nor take any notes. We tried to make it clear that we were bringing no messages to Garcia. Our purpose was to gain information, not give it.

Inside the Inner Sanctum: Thirty Families Interviewed

In this intense and somewhat intimate fashion, I, in company with one or two county agents, visited 30 Washington families in seven counties. We visited full-time, part-time, and retired farm, and some nonfarm families. Age range was from young married couples in their twenties or early thirties with small children to middle-aged couples with teen-age or married children to couples over 60. Farming enterprises included dairy, livestock, swine, poultry, berries, trees and wheat. I wrote summaries of the interviews. In the summaries I tried to be quite specific in describing what I had seen and what I had heard. I circulated the summaries to interested members of the State Extension staff and to my various advisers. I also gave oral reports to groups of staff members as the occasion permitted.

My goal, as I have told you, was to find and to know people. In addition I tried to find out if our information materials are hammering away on the things that are really bothering people--or if we are completely out of touch with THEIR realities. I looked at their homes and farms for evidence of improved practices recommended by Extension; practices we have plugged in our information materials. I tried to find out WHERE people get information so I would know if we are using the right channels. I tried to listen to the words people use and the emotional meaning of the words as they use them.

In short, I have been trying to find out how to communicate with our people in Washington. This covers problems, communication channels, words.

Well - what's in the idea? Does it work? Can it provide valid answers to any of these perennial questions concerning the state and status of our information program?

Hesitations and Hurdles: Are We Afraid of People?

I am as timid and insecure as the next person. Although I was mentally committed to the method, I was often intimidated by vague fears and frustrations during this exploratory period. I believe I can include here a few vague fears by the agents, too.

As a matter of fact, I discovered that agents felt they should not invade homes unless they had a definite reason - an unquestioned entree. Getting acquainted did not appear to be a valid reason to some of the agents. Only one agent openly admitted to some worry about the reception we might get. But I sensed the same worry from the actions of a number of other agents.

I also began to get the idea that farm and home visits as practiced and reported by many agents mean visits requested by families, or visits to leaders or other cooperators to further some phase of the Extension program.

The biggest hurdle I have faced in pretesting the method has been persuading some agents to visit a family they did not know.

I should explain here that I worked the first eight family interviews into a regular field schedule. When the agents asked for my help, I asked for an extra day and their company to make two visits.

In addition, I took two weeks' annual leave to spend one week each in two different counties interviewing families. In these two counties, I made visits with each of the agents in the county, a total of 10 per county, 20 for the two weeks.

In the early visits, I tried various methods of structuring the interview.

I'm speaking of a mental structure - not a written schedule or questionnaire. In the last two counties, I used a post-interview check sheet for recording information immediately after the interview. Following the interview, the agent and I would drive down the road, stop and fill out the check sheet; or fill it out at lunch or dinner. The information was recorded under two main headings: "What I Saw," and "What I Heard: Their Own Words." A copy is attached to this report. I am not satisfied with the check sheet and plan to do considerable revising.

I found that any obvious effort on my part to structure the interview interfered with establishing good rapport between us and our hosts. I sensed a little resentment, a barrier, although a seemingly unconscious one. As I experimented, I found that the best way for me to establish rapport and to be taken to the hearts of our hosts was to forget about structuring, to relax, open up areas of conversation, but not try to direct it. There was one exception. I tried to find out where each family gets information sometime during the interview.

I should mention, also, that we left with each family a printed list of extension bulletins published by Washington State College. The list was, we hope, a follow-up gambit, and a badge of identification to explain the visitors to inquiring husbands or neighbors.

What About the \$500?

I used part of the money award to pay travel and living expenses during the two weeks spent in Clark and Stevens Counties. The rest of the money - after taxes - was used to pay part of my expenses during the past three weeks in Washington, D. C., and New York. I was granted professional leave for these three weeks. I have used the time to confer with the Federal Extension staff and Dr. Wiebe, to prepare this and other reports, and to plan continuing exploration and use of this type of interview.

Now - what have I learned to date? And do please remember that this is merely a progress report.

I have learned an amazing lot from these interviews. Really too much to explain precisely.

Dividends: A Sound-Picture File; A Fresh Approach

First of all, I got a raft of vivid memories. Thirty names can conjure up around 60 or 70 or more faces. Thirty names can recreate the image of 30 homes and their furnishings. Thirty names can bring to mind words and phrases used by as many people - expressions, voice inflections, bodily motions, feelings.

This sound-picture file is pure gold as far as I am concerned. It is a rich lode which can be mined daily and weekly for guides to interests, needs, questions, words. I always came back from these interviews like a bird dog straining at the leash. I came back loaded with ideas for stories, with words, and phrases, with a fresh approach.

This treasury I have shared as far as possible through oral and written reports with other members of the State Extension staff.

In addition to this bankroll, I have also collected many expressed problems and questions. These have served as guides to the preparation and production of some information materials. Of course, since you cannot draw conclusions from case histories, the questions and expressed problems were checked with the specialists concerned before any action was planned. If they felt the problems were fairly general or they, themselves, had been confronted with them, we developed information materials dealing with them.

In our shop, as in yours, information planning and production is a combined effort. When I come up with a hot or cool idea, I share it with Jack Hartline, our radio-visual education specialist; with Maggie Nielsen, our publications editor; and always with our boss and top planner, Al Bond. We share ideas and exchange basic information. Coordination of materials and release dates is simple and easy since our offices are close together.

Shock Treatment Shakes the Ivory Tower

I also relearned in an ego shattering experience just how remote from reality you can get by sitting behind a typewriter in an office. I made the first interviews in late November. In mid-November we had had a quick-freeze throughout the State. Temperatures had dropped from around 60 in a few hours to below zero. And they had stayed in the callar for several days. As a result, canned food froze solid all over the State. Homemakers frantically rang county Extension office phones for days concerning the problem. I sat in Pullman and never dreamed any of this activity was going on. It was the first thing I ran into when I got out of the office for the first visit. Our foods specialist had met the problem county by county but had been in our office too briefly to alert the information staff.

How often has this sort of thing occurred? Who knows? In our office we're determined we'll never be caught quite as flat-footed again. All of us hope to get out for family interviews as often as possible from now ad infinitum.

In our shop, as in yours, we've plugged steadily and persistently for information planning, for a built-in, coordinated information program at the State level and in each county. Basic to this, of course, is information planning by each specialist and every other member of the Extension Service. Each planned segment, of course, should be dovetailed into the overall plan aimed at one or two major objectives for the year.

We hope this study will help us move faster and closer to this goal. I was outraged and downcast to find practices still in use that I thought we had hammered to death with information materials. One such instance was use of poor lighting. When I came back to the office and checked our news story indexes, I found we hadn't pounded the problem nearly as hard nor as often as I had thought. We had put out a number of stories from several different angles. But they had been over a period of four or five years, certainly not enough to give the impact I had fancied.

We Plan a Running Pictures of Information Past and Present

As a result of this disillusionment, we began revising all our news story indexes by phase of work - housing, lighting, laundry, fertilizers, household insects, dairy, livestock, and the like. Titles of stories have been indexed until now only in chronological order. We are now cutting stencils on this index revision. We've made the revision for all the stories issued to agents and to daily papers and radio stations for the past five years.

This new type of listing will show us at a glance what has gone out on a particular problem in the past five years. It should provide a running picture of how we stack up, informationwise, on any phase of the program.

Each specialist, of course, will get a copy of the revised index. We hope this picture of his information past will inspire each one to plan a better information future. If the inspiration does not generate itself, we hope to help light the fuse.

But what about the study itself? Have these exploratory interviews provided any conclusions that might be useful to others who are interested in the method? I have reviewed my experiences minutely with Gus Wiebe, Gladys Gallup, Fred Frutchey, Les Schlup and others. They feel we have ample evidence to offer these findings:

Conclusions: Our Experience Shows --

1. Getting acquainted with people is good and sufficient reason in THEIR eyes for a visit interview of this type. You will be well received by just about everyone. We were, without one single exception. Our difficulty, usually, was to get away. We were often accompanied to the car, urged to come back again, and waved out of sight.
2. For the purpose of getting close to families and for being welcomed into the inner sanctum of their lives, feelings, plans, and problems, the informal interview is more fruitful and establishes better rapport faster than any attempt at structuring, of pointed questioning, of probing and peering.

3. There is some correlation between the information program in the county and (1) recognition of the agents as authorities, and (2) accurate identification and understanding of the Extension program. Agents with regular columns in weekly papers were recognized readily by families in the county who had not met them personally. Identification of the name with the face occurred instantly in two counties where pictures of agents accompanied their weekly columns. In these instances, questions began to flow more easily and the conversation tended to be more relevant.
4. Interviews with families visited for a specific purpose were less productive and satisfying than those with families selected at random and visited for the purpose only of getting acquainted. Agents who made visits with me of both types declared without any prompting on my part that the drop-in visits went better. Where the visit was requested, or made for a specific reason by the agent, it was difficult to bridge over from the specific purpose to general visiting. There was a definite resistance to shifting from business to a friendly visiting situation. Don't ask me why. I can only tell you it happened. And the agents will tell you the same thing.
5. The visits are productive for the agents, too. That's especially true of the unannounced drop-in visits. Even a sample as small as this one brought to light new opportunities for the Extension program. During the visits in only one county, agents were requested for help in organizing a new 4-H club and a new home demonstration club, also for aid by a special interest group. They felt they also found a number of possible participants in the farm and home planning program. In all counties the agents were asked many questions, and given details concerning many problems. These surely provide some additional knowledge of people's needs and interests, some ideas for local information materials, and some considerations to at least weigh in program planning.

I would like to make this final point. This type of interview takes time - a lot of it. You're likely to find that agents are reluctant to take this much time out of their busy schedule. And, of course, this is only one of many ways on finding out about people's basic needs, interests, and problems. All of us should use as many of the other ways as possible. And all of us, I believe, should also try this method, at least now and then.

A Built-in Steering Mechanism for Planning and Evaluating?

As I have mentioned a time or two before, I'm thoroughly sold on the idea and my experiences with it. Farm family interviews are included in my plan of work for next year. We intend that this method of finding people and of keeping in touch with their problems will become as integral a part of our information operations as daily news production and agent training.

Our State Leader of Home Economics Extension, Miss Helen Prout, feels the method can be helpful in training agents to make home visits. Our Extension research director, E. J. Kreizinger, feels that what we learn from this type of interview can be helpful as a yardstick of a kind to measure the validity of the problems brought out by planning committees in courthouse assembled. And A. A. Smick, our community organization specialist, feels this method can help agents get a better and deeper insight into human behavior and motivation.

I think several other members of our State staff also see possibilities in this method. There is, I think, an outside chance we can extend its use gradually to many other Washington extension workers.

After my experiences this past year, I am more convinced than ever that this type of interview is a "natural" for extension workers. With experience and use, it can be evolved, I believe, into at least one kind of a built-in steering mechanism for planning and evaluating our work. And I think our limited experience to date does indicate the method can become an effective new tool without any additional cost or any additional personnel. It is also a tool that can keep State office workers closer to and in better communication with both county workers and the people - our publics. It can help keep us tuned in to the proper wave length when the people speak.

Recommendations to Other Information Workers

Dare I make any recommendations to other information workers on the basis of this exploratory experience? I am a timid soul, but because I love the work we're in, and because I love you, too, I do dare! Here's the way I'd lay it on the line:

1. Make a few visits to families in their homes each year. Use the non-directive approach; let them carry the conversational ball. Listen to the people speak.
2. In your visits, follow a procedure which works for you in establishing good rapport with your hosts. For example, here are the steps I found helpful:
 - a. We introduced ourselves. This sometimes required explaining who we are and what we do.
 - b. We explained informally that we were visiting to get acquainted.
 - c. We opened up areas of conversation by comments or gestures showing interest in things in the home or on the farm.
 - d. We were friendly, sympathetic, or complimentary as the occasion demanded. We showed our interest in them by listening carefully to every word, by looking them in the face as they talked, by waiting expectantly for more when they paused, by smiling encouragingly when they hesitated.
 - e. Sometimes to help break the ice, we told amusing experiences of our own, or related experiences similar to the ones just recounted by the host.
 - f. When questions were raised, the agent provided the required information on the spot, or offered to send a bulletin on the subject.
 - g. To help clinch some type of follow-up, we left a copy of the printed list of Extension bulletins published by Washington State College.

The agent wrote his name, office location and phone number on the leaflet. The agent also noted down specific requests for bulletins. These were sent on our return to the office, or the next day.

- h. To shore up our memories, we jotted down notes on information obtained during the visit as soon after the visit as possible. Sometimes we stopped a piece down the road, or took care of this over a cup of coffee or lunch.
3. Make a written record of what you have seen and heard. Then later on develop a more standardized method of recording and interpreting the information obtained during the visit. Keep a copy of each record in your file. Provide a copy for the county Extension office and for interested members of the State staff.
4. Develop and keep a card index of names of families visited for ready reference.
5. Use these records or reports to help you know the present thinking and practices of people, and to determine the GAPS between practices and Extension recommendations.
6. Develop information materials with extension specialists to help bridge these GAPS.
7. Use these records to help gear future information programs to the expressed interests of the people.

Attachments -

Summary of Interviews
Interview Check Sheets
Partial Bibliography

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Lincoln County, Feb. 13, 1956

General Impressions

1. The attitude of the county Extension agent is a major factor in obtaining a successful interview. If the agent takes the lead, makes the introductions and breaks the ice, the visit and interview seem to develop easily and naturally without any mental questions or reservations on the part of the hostess.
2. The two interviews in different parts of the county, one with a non-owner, and the other with a farm owner, indicated that for these two families at least, the county weekly paper is an important source of information. The same was true for the Farm Journal. Both families also listen to radio, especially during the morning. And one family listened to KHQ's farm programs both morning and noon.
3. These visits also indicated the value of using agent pictures at the top of their news columns. When the home agent mentioned her name, one of our hostesses immediately said: "Oh yes, I've seen your articles in the paper."
- 1-A On both visits, although the home agent did not know who lived at either home where we stopped, she was immediately invited in by the lady of the house when she introduced herself by name and position.
4. These visits indicated that they can provide information of interest to the county agent, too, and a contact for follow-through. The home agent, after listening to the women talk, returned to the office and selected publications to send the families on the basis of their expressed interests during the interviews. The home agent also started thinking aloud as to how she and the other agents could help the families tackle some of the problems brought out in the interviews.
5. These visits also indicated the importance of proper timing for making calls. The home agent felt 10 a.m. was as early as we should try for a call. The hostess seemed glad to see us, invited us in and talked freely and apparently, gladly. However, it was about 11:30 when we left. Much too late--poor sense of timing on my part. I didn't have a watch and didn't realize how time was slipping by. But I'm afraid this is likely to happen more often than not--mornings are just too short.
6. We felt that the printed WSC Extension bulletin list proved useful in these interviews. We brought out the list at the end of the visit--explained its use, and that the bulletins were free on request. Left behind with the family, we believe it also helped explain who we were, and something about our purpose.

2--Interviews

7. A review with the home agent of the HD work in the county helps prime both home agent and information specialist for the visits.. The home agent has been in the county two years. She reviewed her work--subject matter, methods and objectives for me. The process--a very interesting one--took about two hours. This occurred the day before the visits. But it put us on common ground during the visits.

Story Ideas From Lincoln County

1. Will peanut butter and jelly freeze all right when used in sandwiches?
2. Which costs more--homemade bread--or bakery bread? Cookies?
3. Recipes for Valentine cookies. (next year)
4. How can children get out of broken windows without cutting feet. etc?
How teach children how to break glass without actually breaking it?
5. How wake up heavy sleepers, especially children, so they can get out of the house in case of fire?
6. Is it better to move a house or to tear it down and rebuild?
7. Hail and fire insurance for grain crops
8. How much Tide to use to a tubful of laundry? (How save soap?)
9. Why does water make clothes yellow ?
10. How get children to appreciate having homemade bread in school sandwiches.
How counteract the feeling that if it's different it's wrong?
11. How thaw and prepare frozen cooked foods?
12. Food value of canned versus frozen vegetables and fruit.
13. Take children with you in the evenings or get a baby sitter?
14. Does fertilizer increase production costs?
15. Home-planning bulletins
16. How best store 50 to 100-lbs of flour?

Useful Information: Lincoln County

TV: Talked to three homemakers--one was the wife of a hired worker, one was the wife of a farm owner, the other was a home demonstration club member living in Davenport. Her husband was a night-shift worker. All three had had a TV set for two years or more. At first, all said they got little done. Now they watch TV only in the evenings--and have become highly selective. All three liked Ed Murrow's show. One homemaker also sometimes watched the afternoon women's program over a Spokane station. And she and her husband viewed the evening farm show over KHQ.

Radio: All three homemakers said they kept their radio turned on all morning, but mostly just for company--just listened half-consciously. The wife of the farm owner said she and her husband listened to KHQ's farm editor both in the morning and at noon. She and her husband also listen to Ken Hutcheson, one of KNEW's farm editors. They apparently do not listen to KGA or to KXLY. The latter has no farm show. This homemaker, whose son is a WSC graduate in engineering, said she also sometimes listens to KWSC, the college station. The motel operator, a lady was listening to KHQ's Margaret Smith Show, a women's program. She said she kept her radio on all morning, too.

Weekly Paper: All three homemakers said they read the county weekly--the Davenport Times. The wife of the farm worker appeared to recognize Lois Scantland after she introduced herself. Mrs. R. said: "Oh yes, I've seen your name in the paper." (Lois' picture is used with her column in the Davenport Times.)

Daily Paper: The wife of the farm owner and the town homemaker read the Spokeman Review. The other farm wife preferred the Chronicle but it is delivered a day late, so they do not take a daily paper. They do buy a Sunday Review, and sometimes see the Review taken by the farm owner who lives across the road from them.

Farm Journals: None of the three homemakers see or read the Washington Farmer. The two farm wives both see the Farm Journal. The farm worker's wife takes McCall's magazine. Her husband reads the Journal. The farm owner living across the road passes along his copy. The wife of the farm owner said she and her husband both read the Journal. They also used to take the Country Gent. She especially likes the women's section. Her husband prefers the Washington report. He is very interested in farm programs, she said. The wife of the farm worker said her husband was most interested in machinery and farm shop tips. He clips all suggestions from the Journal for a notebook.

Extension Contacts: The farm worker's wife said her mother was a home demonstration club member. She hoped to join when her three little girls get bigger. One of her little girls would soon be old enough for 4-H, and her mother seemed anxious for her to join. She knows some 4-H members and leaders. The wife of the farm owner had demonstrated china painting at a HD Christmas gift workshop. She said her husband visited the Extension office frequently.

VISITS MADE (LINCOLN COUNTY)

1. Mrs. Lee Randall, Rt. 1, Davenport. (Made from 10 to 11:30 a.m.)

Mrs. Randall's husband is employed by the farm owner who lives across the road. By chance we turned into their driveway instead of that of the owner. The Randalls have three little girls--Vicki, 5, and two in school, ages 7 and 8, I believe.

Mrs. Randall is an attractive brunette, rather stout, seemed to have a slight limp. She has beautiful warm, friendly brown eyes, and dark hair, worn short--a becoming coiffeur. In the course of the conversation we learned she goes into town to the beauty parlor. Vicki has beautiful, well-cared-for auburn hair, big brown eyes and a clear peaches and cream complexion. A beautiful child!

The home agent, Lois Scantland, introduced herself when Mrs. Randall came to the door. Mrs. Randall instantly said: "Oh yes, I've seen your name in the paper." (Lois's picture is used with her column--so maybe that helped make the name stick).

Inside the kitchen, Mrs. Randall asked us if we'd like some warmed over coffee. It was a cold morning and both of us showed we'd be delighted. So the three of us sat around the breakfast table sipping coffee. Mrs. Randall said she has a girl almost ready for 4-H. She also said her mother belonged to an Extension club, a Mrs. Simpson. Lois remembered her. So the conversation centered around Mrs. S. for a while. Mrs. Randall then said that her husband worked for Joe, the owner, who lived across the street. But the Randalls had recently bought 80 acres near her mother and would soon move out there. They had also bought an old house for \$300 and were going to move it onto the farm. Her husband would also soon operate the 350-acres owned by the Simpsons--mostly pasture land. The business would be livestock. The Simpsons were planning to retire on their social security payments. Lee Randall had had a severe case of pneumonia about a year ago. It had left him with a severe allergy to animal hair, dust, house dust, grain, etc. He has to wear a mask when he works. He takes shots. When exposed to any of these causes, he has great difficulty breathing. Lee is interested in setting up a farm shop. He had gone through a whole bunch of Farm Journals given to him by Joe for farm shop tips. Just the night before, the girls had clipped out the items and Joe is putting them into a notebook.

Mrs. Randall now does most of her own baking. Started when the family was snowed in for a few days--the family liked the homemade bread so well, that she has continued to make bread. Buys flour in 50-pound sacks. Has a problem of storage for such a large amount. She was trying to find a barrel like her mother used to have. Her mother, also, had done all her own baking for the family. The children liked the bread to eat at home--but didn't want to carry it to school. They had to have sandwiches made of bakery bread. Mrs. Randall froze the bakery bread so it would keep--made sandwiches of the frozen bread. Lois asked her if she made sandwiches and froze them. She asked if you could freeze peanut butter and jelly all right. That was the only kind of sandwich the children would eat.

2--Randall visit

She spreads peanut butter on one slice, jelly on the other. Mrs. Randall had been looking through McCall's, the February issue, for Valentine cooky recipes when we came in. There were no recipes in the magazine--for valentine cookies, that is. (Lois mailed her the WSC Extension Cooky book). Mrs. R. said she also baked cakes and pies--but not too many--the children loved cookies--so she baked lots of cookies.

The Randalls freeze meat, store it in a locker in town--but that is inconvenient. So Mrs. R. cans fruts and vegetables so they will be more accessible. She hopes to get a home freezer some day.

The house occupied by the Randalls is old and hard to heat--the family uses two stoves. Mrs. R. said one of the stoves almost exploded the other night. She had heard it heaving--had opened the door--a lot of smoke and some flames belched out at her. Vicki was standing behind her in pajamas. She said, "Mama, are we going to burn up?" Mrs. R. said, "No. Go on in the front room." She turned out the stove. When she got to the front room a little later, Vicki had put on her clothes. "She wasn't going to get caught in a fire without her clothes on."

Mrs. R. mentioned that Lee had seen an article in the Farm Journal about fires--every family should have a fire drill often. Children should be shown how to break windows so they could get out. "But how can we show the children? We can't afford to break a window. And how can we keep the children from getting their feet cut on the glass if they do break the window?"

Lois had done some work with clubs on hard water and laundry problems. So I mentioned how hard the water was in the motel in Davenport. Mrs. R. said her water wasn't hard--but did color the clothes somewhat--rusty. She uses TIDE--about a cup to a tub. She has trouble with the washer--pump doesn't always work right. Joe had tried to fix it. The washer had a suds saver on it--but with the washer in the kitchen, she couldn't save the suds. Joe had brought the washer into the kitchen because it froze up in the unheated room where it had been. She said the water from the yard and the roof drained into the cistern. They had had the water tested for purity--and it had tested free of bacteria. She didn't see how it could, though, with all the drainage. The livestock, though, were all across the road at Joe's place. So that helped.

Mrs. R. was worried about having the house moved. The movers wanted \$50 just to go out and see if they could move the house. And if they couldn't--the Randalls would have to pay the \$50 anyway. She thought the house was a good buy because it had good bathroom fixtures. Maybe they would have to tear the house down and use the materials to build on their place.

She said the family hopes to get a big tent. They liked to go fishing in the summer--and camp out. But she wants a tent you can stand up in--one costing \$100. The children enjoy camping out and fishing. She said they take the children with them wherever they go. You can't get baby sitters--and you have to go to Davenport for them--then take them back again--and

3--Randall visit

it takes money too. Besides, when she was a little girl, the children always went to events with their mother and dad. They'd go to sleep, of course.

She said her children were so hard to wake--especially the older one. She's afraid she'd never get her awake and up in time to save her in case of fire. I mentioned firebells that the family could buy as one way to help get the family out. No response.

Mrs. Randall said she had bought material for Easter dresses for the girls, but doesn't sew very well. Lois mentioned a publication on use and care of new fabrics she might like.

I brought out the bulletin list. Lois and I showed Mrs. Randall some of the bulletins she might be interested in. We wrote the address of the county Extension office on the list. Mrs. Randall came to the door with us and waved us goodbye. Her husband had brought milk into the house while we were there and had come in once or twice again. Lois told him we were leaving and hoped we hadn't kept his wife from getting his lunch. Lois also told him she understood he was going to farm on his own. He said, "Well, I don't know how it will go. But I guess I'll just join the rest of the stump ranchers."

As we were leaving, Mrs. Randall said: "I'll have to fly around now and really get things done." She had told us as we entered that she was glad to be able to take things easy today. This is the first day in two weeks she hadn't had one of the girls home in bed with a cold. During the interview, Lois had asked if we were keeping her from her work. Always she had said--"There are things I could do all right, but I'm glad to have a chance to be lazy for awhile."

We did stay longer than we should have. But Mrs. R. bid us a cordial goodbye and thanked us for dropping by--waved us out to the car.

As we drove back into town, Lois asked, "What do you think she will tell her husband we came for?" Neither of us was sure. Then Lois began to list the bulletins she would send her. Wondered aloud if they should try to help the family with a farm and home plan. Said she was sure she could help the family through some good Extension cooperators in the community to which they were moving.

When we got to the Extension office, Lois immediately checked off the list of bulletins to send to the family, then dictated her news column for the week.

VISITS MADE (LINCOLN COUNTY)

2. Mrs. Oscar B. Shepard, Rural Route Davenport. (Made from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m., February 13, 1956)

Mrs. Shepard is a small, sprightly, slightly-stooped greying blonde. She speaks rapidly and with animation. Her movements are quick. We interrupted her in the midst of her laundry. She had a scarf around her head. Her light housedress had a tear under one arm.

We had had difficulty parking the car in the snow. Since no one came from the house to help, we thought no one would be home. I said, "No one's home; let's try another place." Lois said: "No. We just can't drive off now without at least knocking."

We waited for some time after knocking. Finally Lois said, "I hear someone coming." Mrs. Shepard looked out. Lois introduced herself. Then the two recognized each other. Mrs. S. said: "Come on in out of the cold." We went through the kitchen into a sunroom where there was a small kiln and racks of painted china. Mrs. S. had helped the HD council hold a Christmas gift workshop. She had demonstrated china painting. The conversation centered around her hobby. She showed us several pieces she is working on. Told us she had just ordered a set of China blanks and is anxious to try out some new studies.

Lois explained my presence and interests. Mrs. S. immediately said she and her husband listened to the Spokane farm announcers--Tom Templeton and Ken Hutcheson. They both read the Farm Journal. She likes the women's section. He likes the news from Washington. She said she keeps her radio turned on all morning--likes to listen to music. They watch TV--the programs they like--in the evening. She sometimes watches an afternoon women's program. They especially like Ed Murrow's program. She mentioned the one on agriculture. She said farmers should be proud that he gave so much time to their problems. She said she and her husband did not like the present farm program. They operate a small farm--350 acres. Last year they grew barley on the set-aside acres. They had luckily taken out hail insurance just a week or so before a severe hail storm destroyed a third of their crop. Neighbors in the area rushed into town to buy hail insurance after the storm. They had had two hail storms within 12 hours.

Mrs. S. said she also listens to KWSC, the college station some. Her son is an engineering graduate of WSC. He is now an industrial design engineer in California. She and her husband spend two or three of the winter months, usually, visiting their son. The two grandchildren are a big attraction.

They read the weekly Davenport Times and take the Spokesman Review. Mrs. S. said they had bought their TV set four years ago because of the presidential campaign. She and her husband seem to have much interest in political and economic developments. I asked her if her husband got Karl Hobson's monthly farm outlook publication. She said no, but thought he would like it. I had left the bulletin list in the car. So went after it. Lois and I went through the list with her. We suggested they might

2--Shepard visit

be interested in "Which Farm Program," by economists of Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. She looked the list over with interest. Asked: "How much are these bulletins?" We explained they are free. We asked her if her husband knew where the county Extension office is. She said: "Oh yes, he's always going in there to find out about something."

Mrs. S. indicated all through the visit that her two interests are china painting and the general farm situation. She indicated she paid little attention to housework. She doesn't go out much when she's home. She keeps busy with her painting and does everything else as fast as possible. She does like plants and flowers. She had just received some small palms from California and had potted them that morning.

Mrs. S. talked about the farm. Said their land was all good land. Her husband follows a wheat-summer-fallow-wheat rotation. She said the yield is very good. Sometimes as high as 30 bushels per acre--but doesn't average that. She said her husband does not use fertilizer. That the land is good; doesn't need fertilizer.

We asked if Mr. S. was in Spokane attending the Farm Forum. She said she didn't know, but expected so. He had left when she was potting palms so hadn't had a chance to tell her where he was going.

When we entered, Mrs. S. had apologized for her appearance. Said we had caught her in the middle of her laundry. I thought I detected a trace of annoyance. Lois, however, appeared not to hear this remark and started talking about her china painting. Mrs. S. brightened instantly and talked about her work for some time.

When we left, she thanked us for coming, said she had enjoyed the visit and the conversation, and walked with us to the door. She said she would probably call Lois to come out and watch her do a special plaque--if and when the blank arrived. Lois urged her to do so.

OTHER STORY IDEAS FROM NEEDS SEEN OR EXPRESSED

LIGHT AND COLOR

1. Proper lighting for TV. Some experimentation on this was obvious. Glare was the main realized problem. Little understanding of strain caused by eye adjusting to light and dark areas.
2. What causes glare in lighting. One lady with plastic covers on her lampshade said she couldn't have these lamps on when the TV set was on because of glare. She did not associate glare with the plastic shades.
3. Effect of color on lighting. Medium to dark shades of greens and browns were used in two homes. In the home where lighting came out in the conversation as a problem, no realization was shown of the effect of the dark color on the general level of lighting.
4. Combining color. Some evidence of attempt to reproduce exotic color schemes in magazine. No skill at mixing color to get desired effect evident. One result: a light blue and brilliant red combination left me uncomfortable for hours.
5. Selecting lamps and shades for good light and style. (There should be a law against some of the lamps and shades people spend their money for.)

(We have hit these things but apparently not enough. Believe visits will help us tie up the story in an approach more likely to draw attention and convince.)

HOUSING

1. Should you buy an old house? (Visited one home that looks like a white elephant. Couple knocking themselves out to make it liveable but doubt if their efforts can hold back the galloping decay for long.)
2. Is there a simple, easy way to repair plaster? Would it be less expensive to scrape off the broken plaster and nail wallboard over the entire area. One homemaker made 150 patches in one fairly small ceiling. A ceiling in an adjoining room similarly patched and painted was already coming loose in spots.
3. Moss on roofs. Noted much moss on unpainted shingle roofs. Little on painted shingle roofs and perhaps none on composition roofs. Remedy simple, of course, Copper ridge pole or copper nails along ridge.
4. Why basements on west side? Flooded basements apparently common occurrence on west side. So why insist on a house with a basement? Storage can be provided elsewhere where it is needed.
5. Insulated fruit storage. Problem on west side where temperatures usually fairly mild. One bad freeze about every 5 years. Justifies expense. Or is there an inexpensive way of providing protection for canned food.
6. Prevent wood decay on west side. Concrete foundation--Keep wood off ground. Too much wooden siding resting on ground--looked molded and decayed.

2--Story ideas

FOODS

1. Beets, carrots, other root vegetables can be stored. Explain how. Tie to--save time and money--no need to freeze or can. (Have heretofore simply written as a storage story with no connection with food preservation methods. Homemaker didn't realize beets could be stored throughout winter.)
2. Structures for root storage.
3. Freezing beans. (Time can affect the taste and texture.) One homemaker has frozen beans once with poor luck. Beans were tough--tasteless. Thought she'd picked them too mature. However, the time lag between picking and freezing was responsible. She picked them one day, froze the next. Had ever since returned to canning beans rather than freezing although she had food locker. Apparently, time is most important factor in freezing beans. Has been stressed--but not enough, I guess.
4. Home baking: One of best ways to reduce grocery bill and help farm family ease cost-price squeeze. Visited one homemaker who did all her baking--bread, cookies, pies, cakes.

HEALTH

1. Hammer on fatty diets to reduce. Self-torture and short-time starvation have little lasting effect as they don't change the diet pattern. Result--a return to old eating habits will mean regaining all the lost weight. Women look for the easy way.

PASTURES

1. Drainage--and forage crops adapted to wet soils. Water standing in many pastures on west side. A common occurrence evidently. Pastures lower than river. What can be done? Build up levees and pump water off? Dig drainage canals like in Holland? What would be cost? How much production stepped up?

LIVESTOCK

1. Mastitis problem of dairy animals on west side. Why?
2. Footrot likely with cows spending much time in mud or wet pastures. How prevent?
3. Peavine silage stacked up looks lethal. Is it good or can it be improved? Some of it looked molded.

FAMILY FINANCES

1. Records: Need to cut costs expressed by number of homemakers. Records one way to find where saving can be made.
2. Crafts: Home crafts being used as one way to cut Christmas cost by many. Home management specialist suggests interest in crafts be used as a stepping stone toward good design. Teach principles of good design in crafts as women are interested in that--work to transfer same principles to other areas of living.

SAFETY

1. Fire-control systems: Kinds, relative costs, type of action. How affect fire insurance premiums.

LAUNDRY METHODS: Best cleaning agent for automatic machine, non-automatic.
Use of water softeners to save soap, etc.

FLOOR CLEANING: Linoleums

CLOTHING: Plug basic dress and suit more. Stress style and money saved, also less closet-space needed.

I. POST - INTERVIEW CHECK SHEET: PROBLEMS, INTERESTS, PRACTICES

Date:

Family:

Address:

County:

THE FAMILY

What I Saw

What I Heard--Their Own Words

No. of Members

Relative age of parents

Present location of children

Age of children

Other people living in home

Related

Not-related

General appearance

General attitudes (Positive, negative,
etc. as expressed in actual words)

Child care and development

Questions

Probable problems

Attitudes

2.--Check Sheet I

What I Saw

What I Heard--Their Own Words

Clothing

Condition

Quality

Questions

Fabric facts

Style

Figure problems

Color

Price and quality

Headaches

Family goals

Long range

Short time

For children

For parents

Family Relations

Attitude toward children

Parents attitude toward each other

Problems expressed

Socio-Economic Status

- Level of Living
 - Farm owner, renter, or hired hand
- Community group affiliation
- Ethnic group
- Expressed problems
- Probable problems (as indicated by home,
farm buildings, equipment)

Community leadership

- This family
- Someone they mention

Relationship with neighbors

T H E H O M E

- Age
- Condition
- Remodeled?
- Size
- Storage
- Arrangement
- Materials used
- Headaches

4.---Check Sheet I

Home Equipment

Equipment in home

Questions

Condition

Use

Headaches

Home furnishings

Quality

Condition

Design

Color coordination

Construction

Headaches

Floors

Finish

Material

Coverings

Durability

Care

Headaches

What I Saw

What I Heard---Their Own Words

5.—Check Sheet I

Laundry

Equipment

Methods

Water

Location of utility room

Drying Facilities

Headaches

Lighting

Quality

Lamps

Fixtures

Relation to color

Headaches

Work methods and time management

Time mentioned as a problem

Evidences of poor time mgm.

Arrangement of work centers

Labor saving equipment

Headaches

What I Heard—Their Own Words

What I Saw

6.--Check Sheet I

What I Heard--Their Own Words

What I Saw

Safety

Fire hazards

Accident hazards

Health hazards

F O O D A N D H E A L T H

Diet-Health-Nutrition

Overweight

Underweight

Physical Handicaps

Diet questions

Other problems

Food Production and Supply

Garden

Dairy Products

Fruit

Meat

Headaches

7.—Check Sheet I

Food Preparation

Home Baking

Headaches

Food Preservation

Canning

Freezing

Equipment

Methods

Headaches

Food Management

Costs

Storage

Waste

What I Saw

What I Heard—Their Own Words

8.--Check Sheet I

T H E F A R M

What I Saw

What I Heard--Their Own Words

Size

Land Class

Location

Distance from nearest shopping center

Road condition

Farming Enterprises

Main

Acres

Rotation

Others

Acres of each

Practices

Good

Poor

Equipment

List

Age

Condition

What I Saw

What I Heard—Their Own Words

Farm Structures

List of Structures

Age

Condition

Arrangement (farmstead layout)

Interior arrangement re: efficiency

Needs

Headaches

II. POST-INTERVIEW CHECK SHEET: INFORMATION SOURCES

Date:

Family:

Address:

County:

Daily Papers: (list)

Weekly Papers: (list)

Read agent's columns or stories

Magazines

Farm

Women's

News

Others

Radio listening

Hours:

Local farm programs

Extension programs

National farm programs

Women's programs

News

Preferred programs

Others

2.--Check Sheet II (Information sources)

TV Listening

Hours

Local Farm Program

National Farm Program

Women's Program

News

Preferred programs

Extension Influence

4-H Members in Family

4-H Leaders in Family

HD Member in Family

DHIA Member or other Extension
Sponsored Organization

Attends Extension Meetings

Knows Agent Personally

Knows who agent is and where located

Has contacted Extension Office

Knows Extension Agent Relation to WSC

Neighbors as Information Source

Dealers and Salesmen

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Date:
Family:
Address:
County:

A. By Information Specialist

News Stories Indicated

B. By County Agent

Bulletins Needed by Family

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* Report prepared in Federal Extension Office. Complete list inadvertently left in Pullman, Washington.



